



NW Fruit

February 2025

16650 State Route 536, Mount Vernon, WA 98273

in cooperation with the Northwest Washington Research & Extension Center (NWREC) of Washington State University

NWF Winter Field Day Saturday March 8, 2025

Northwest Fruit (nwfruit.org) will host Winter Field Day at the six-acre demonstration fruit garden. We are selling rootstocks and scionwood to help people make their own trees.

[Join or renew](#) your annual NWF membership [today](#) to attend: \$25 for individual membership or \$40 for family membership. Field days are free for members. Non-members pay \$15 for an individual day-of-event pass.



[White Pippin](#), by Royal Charles Steadman, b. 1875. USDA Pomological Watercolor Collection

◆ Fruit Garden News & Education ◆

- Activities**
- Registration begins at 9:00 am. All attendees register and hand stamp. Details p. 2.
 - Sales tables open 10:00 am to 2:00 pm for scionwood, rootstocks and grafting.

Class Schedule in the Auditorium

9:20 — Orientation

9:30 — Grafting & Rootstocks: Sam Benowitz demonstrates how to make a new tree with grafting techniques including whip & tongue, bark & side grafts. Also budding and interstem to topwork new varieties onto an existing tree. Learn which rootstocks to use and how to make your own rootstocks.

10:20 — Heritage Apple Project - Our Fruit Garden volunteers are starting some new heritage apple trees, you may want to join this project. Volunteer expert Lori Brakken will discuss the project and then be available to talk with you individually. More detail on page 3.

10:40 — Spring tasks in your fruit garden - Gary Moulton will discuss a calendar of what to do for your fruit in spring and summer. Learn when and how to deal with insect and fungus problems, pruning, irrigation and other techniques.

11:30 — Understanding fruit tree pruning - Gary Moulton's slide presentation explains how to prune different types of fruit trees. Gary's principles are easy to understand and applicable to your fruit trees.

12:30 — Lunchtime: Bring your lunch and attend the brief but informative **NWF Membership Meeting** held annually on this field day.

more Field Day activities >>

March 8 ♦ Schedule, continued

Sales Tables:
10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Rootstocks \$5 • Scionwood* \$3 • Custom Graft \$5

Please Note >> *Cash or check, no credit cards* <<

- Grafting supplies for sale: grafting knives, grafting bands, parafilm rolls.
- Grafting services are provided for educational purposes and thus are limited to two at a time. Wait in line again for another two.
- Our rootstocks average 1/4 inch in diameter, the best size for grafting the available scion wood.
- ★ Purchase our scionwood or bring your own. See How To Collect Scionwood, page 20.

Class Schedule
in the Fruit Garden

1:15 pm Pruning and growing: How to prune mature fruit trees. At our nursery area we will show you our new trees made from budding and grafting. We also display how to make a stool bed, which enables the propagation of rootstock.

2:15 pm Guided tour of the Fruit Garden: We have about 700 different cultivars of fruiting trees and bushes growing in our six acre, 30-year-old garden. It is all maintained by NWF members. Bring questions about your home fruit garden to learn from our knowledgeable volunteers.

Admission

- **Free to NWF members.** Become a member by purchasing an annual \$25 individual membership or \$40 family membership, at the event or preferably now on our [website](#).
- NWF offers a \$15 One Day Guest Pass for this event. You can pay for admission at the event, but by paying it [here now](#) the Registration line will move more quickly. Credit card capability on your phone thru PayPal, for Admission but not for other sales.

The proceeds fund our organization's garden maintenance and events.

Weather:

- Rain or shine – Dress for the weather. A large portion of the day's events take place in WSU Sakuma Auditorium or under shelter right outside the building. A bit of rain won't hinder our afternoon demo's in the garden.

Availability:

We will limit the number that can be purchased before noon to three of any one variety, except the cherry and peach, which are limited to one, so everyone gets a chance to buy their preference. After noon, people may buy what is remaining.

How To Find Your Membership Status

If the email by which you received this newsletter begins "Hello NW Fruit **Member**" then your membership is current.

If the email begins "Hello NW Fruit **Friend**" then your membership is not current at present, or will expire before March 8. Membership expires on the anniversary of the last payment.

Rootstocks Offered For Sale at Winter Field Day 2025

Rootstocks listed below are followed by the estimated size a tree can be easily maintained on that rootstock. Mature tree size varies due to many factors including the vigor of the cultivars grafted, as well as the climate, soil conditions and the pruning strategies used.

Apple

BUD 9 Maintain at 6 to 10 foot height and width. Great choice for containers or growing in the ground. Induces early heavy bearing. Used commercially for trees grown on trellises. It requires permanent staking. Thrives on a variety of soils. Long proven, reliable, very winter hardy. Often used as an interstem with EMLA 111 to make a very well rooted but very dwarfed tree.

EMLA 7 Maintain at 13 to 18 foot height. Makes a semi dwarf tree, well anchored, reliable and productive.

EMLA 26 Maintain at 10 to 15 foot height. Makes a dwarf tree that is well anchored, reliable and productive. Note, if not maintained it can grow more than 15' tall in our area, but it is easily managed from the ground and produces bushels of apples. It doesn't sucker and grows well on a variety of soils and usually doesn't require staking. It is reported not to perform well when replanted where an apple tree was planted before.

EMLA 27 Maintain at 5 to 8 foot height and width. Great choice for containers or growing in the ground. Induces early heavy bearing. Because it's a mini dwarf, start its first branches one to two feet above the ground. Benefits from staking. Thrives on a variety of soils.

EMLA 111 Maintain at 16 to 20 feet in height. It has a great fibrous root system, excellent anchorage and does well on wetter soils. It makes a precocious, productive tree. The best candidate for the understock of an interstem tree. We can graft an EMLA 27 piece about six inches long on the EMLA 111 which can later be grafted to your chosen variety. This makes a dwarf tree maybe 10 feet tall, that can start bearing sooner, with the supportive roots of a much larger tree.

MARK Maintain at 10 to 16 foot height. Mark is a hardy, precocious dwarfing rootstock that makes a tree about the size of EMLA 26. It has grown well for years for many growers in our region. It is no longer widely available nationwide because it is not drought resistant. It is well anchored, produces some burr knots at ground level but has heavy crops and shouldn't be allowed to overbear as a young tree. Take advantage of this unique opportunity to get it.

Pear

OLD HOME X FARMINGDALE 87 (OHxF 87)

Trees can be maintained at 15 to 20 feet tall or even smaller with pruning. Developed in Oregon, this rootstock is compatible with European and Asian Pears, also with Shipova and with medlars. It seems to be very productive and early bearing. It thrives on a variety of soils and does very well in our region.

Quince

PROVENCE BA29C Maintain at 15 to 20 feet tall. Quince is compatible with some pears, including Comice, thus Comice can be used as an interstem.

Cherry

MAZZARD Maintain at 16 to 30 foot height. It thrives in our region but this tree can grow to 30 feet or more; keep it smaller with pruning. We were unable to get dwarf cherry rootstock this year. A dwarfing tart cherry interstem can be used to make a smaller tree.

Plum

Apricots and most almonds are compatible with Mariana rootstock. Some peaches work well on Krymsk I.

MARIANA 2624 Maintain at 13 to 20 feet in height. An older rootstock, widely compatible with plums, apricots and most almonds, but not peaches. Makes an excellent tree in our area, best choice in wet soils. Usually more vigorous than the Krymsk 1, and produces root suckers that need to be cut back each year.

KRYMSK 1 Maintain at 10 to 15 feet in height. This newer rootstock from Gennady Eremin in Russia has proven reliable for stone fruit growers in the U.S. It is widely compatible with plums, apricots and with some peaches. It does well on a variety of soils and produces some suckers.

Peach

Apricots and Peaches work well on Lovell peach rootstock. Bud grafting peaches onto peach rootstock is done in the summer, it's not practical in winter. The rootstock can be planted now, however, for bud grafting in summer.

LOVELL Maintain at 10 to 15 feet in height. A seedling rootstock that does best in well drained soils. Also compatible with Plums.

Scionwood For Sale at Winter Field Day 2025



<< NWF volunteers with Laure Janzen, prepping scions on a cold Thursday!
from Scott Terrell

* Did you know --
The DeCoster Jonagolds were developed in Belgium to be redder than a regular Jonagold. Regular Jonagolds are green with a red blush. Growers can get more money growing red apples than green. ! Yep.
from Colleen Sanders

APPLE

Akane
Alkmene
Ananas Reinette
Ashmead's Kernel
Belle de Boskoop
Ben Davis
Beni Shogun
Black Gilliflower
Blue Pearmain
Braeburn
Bramley's Seedling
Brown Snout
Cap of Liberty
Centennial
Chisel Jersey
Daliest Elstar
Esophus Spitzenburg
Fameuse
Golden Russet
Grand Alexander
Gravenstein Candystripe
Gravenstein Red
Grimes Golden
Harrison
Harry Master's Jersey
Hawaii
Hawkeye
Hewes Virginia Crab
Hidden Rose
Hudson's Golden Gem
Jonagold deCoster*
Karmijn de Sonnaville

Kingston Black
Melrose
Milton
Mollie's Delicious
Newton Pippin
Niedzwetskyana
Northern Spy
Oliver
Priscilla
Pristine
Roxbury Russet
Rubinette
Silken
Summer Rose
Tompkins King
Tugari Homei
Wealthy
Westfield Seek-No-Further
Williams' Pride
Winter Banana
Wolf River

ALMOND

Nikita's Pride
Oracle

CHERRY

Early Burlat
Lapins
White Gold

We have Oliver! >>
For more detailed descriptions
of varieties available on March 8,
go to NWfruit.org/events

PLUM

Beauty
Early Laxton
Imperial Epineuse
Italian Plum
Kuban Burgundy
Methley
Obilnaja
Prune d'Ente
Shiro

EUROPEAN PEAR

Atlantic Queen
Bosc
Comice
Highland
Orcas
Russet Comice
Stuttgarter Geishirtle
Suij

ASIAN PEAR

Chojuro
Hamese
Ichiban Nashi
Mishirasu

QUINCE

Aromatnaya
Karp's Sweet

OTHER FRUIT

Breda Giant Medlar
Shipova (Pear x Mt. Ash)



Fruit Garden Report ♦ Winter 2025

All fruit enthusiasts are welcome to become NWF members and join us in maintaining some 700 fruiting plants in about 50 different growing projects. We can use your help. NWF volunteers who work at the fruit garden learn pruning and grafting techniques, pest control techniques, equipment operation and how to install irrigation on our new plantings.

Richard Fairfield joins Sam Benowitz as co-chair of the Fruit Garden Committee. Tom Wake is preparing to retire as Garden Manager and parcel out his duties to other NWF volunteers. Former co-chair Colleen Sanders remains engaged but not in the co-chair role. Here are some highlights of what's new in the garden:

Heritage Apple Project - For the Inner Oval we have Brown Russet, Flower of Kent and Johnny Appleseed trees on M26, ready to plant. Larry Crum's QR codes on inner oval apple trees link to vibrant descriptions and the storied backgrounds of these varieties. We are also preparing twenty-five unique, northwest heritage varieties to be grown along the west espalier in sector W3. More detail on this project on page 7.

Top Working Project - Larry Crum has also led the multi-variety top-working of several other apple and pear trees, making it possible for us to have many more varieties in our orchard space. Many of these top-worked trees also have QR codes.

Plum row - Plums tested and proven superior at WSU Mount Vernon are now new in the Fruit Garden, recently planted in a row in sector W3. These include Kuban Comet, Purple Gage, Jam Session, and Sprite. We moved the Hollywood Plum from W1 to this row in W3 and we have new replacement trees for Imperial Epineuse, Mount Royal and Coe's Golden Drop.

Pears - We are planting a Seckel pear and our new Perry pears include Hendre Huffcap and its pollinizer Butt, in sector W2.

Quince - Last year we top grafted multiple varieties onto the Aromatnaya on the espalier in W4. We also have a Karp's Sweet in W2. This year we will add Ekmek, Havran, Smyrna and Claribel.

Cider Apples - We will plant only one cider apple, the Kingston Black, and in the future we can top work other cider varieties on the tree. We also have a combo American cider apple tree already on the west fence in W3.

Crabapples - Centennial and Puget Spice, a crabapple bred at NWREC, will be planted.

Malus fusca - Crabapples are the only apple native to North America; *Malus fusca* is the only crabapple native to the NW Pacific coast. Onto *Malus fusca* rootstock (some with, some without Bud9 interstems) we have grafted nine varieties of apples and pears in the nursery. More about *Malus fusca* on page 14.

Other Berries - We continue our demonstration projects for Haskaps (6 varieties), Elderberries (12 varieties), and Ribes (Read about [Ribes](#) in NWF June '24 Newsletter).

Fig Project - In April of 2024, with Ned Garvey heading the project, a row of nine fig varieties was planted. A second row with more varieties will be planted in 2025. See article on page 6.

Tea Plant Project - From Dr. Carol Miles' [NWREC trials](#) we will plant three Mento variety tea plants. We leave room for future varieties also being tested at WSU Mount Vernon.

Nursery Project - The nursery is doing well, with a stoolbed of M27, Bud 9, M26, M111 and G41 apple, plus Marriana 2624 and Krymsk 1 plum rootstocks. More than 30 rootstocks were successfully budded in August 2024 and will be available to plant in two years.



Despite the recent February cold snap, buds on a Cornelian cherry tree continue to swell and break. • from Scott Terrell

Sam Benowitz, Fruit Garden Committee Co-Chair

NWF Class Schedule ♦ Spring 2025

From our Education Committee - Saturday Classes, 9 to 11

Free with current membership. Each class has a separate registration, which must be completed 7 days in advance of the class date. [Use this Signup Genius link to register](#) for one or all the classes.

Note - if a class is full and you want to be put on a wait list, send email to [Jake Jacobson](#). If demand warrants, we will schedule a second class for the next Thursday morning following each class.

March 22 - Advanced Grafting with Larry Crum and others. We will teach you to whip graft (also called splice graft) your own fruit tree. We will also discuss cleft grafting, used when scions are much smaller than the rootstock. There will also be a general discussion on after graft care. You will need to bring your own scion wood* and rootstock to the class as well as a grafting knife and sharp pruners. These will be available for purchase at the Winter Field Day on March 8 if you need them. We will have a few grafting knives to share if you don't yet have your own knife, along with wood to practice with, and we will supply the necessary rubber bands and parafilm to complete the finished graft. There may be a limited selection of both scions and rootstock available for purchase at the class. Class size is **limited to 12 members**. (* see page 16)

April 19 - Top Working with Larry Crum and others. Top Work is done using bark grafting, to add a scion of a different variety to an established tree. You will see a demonstration on how to perform this graft (different from a splice graft) and then practice doing the work yourself, under the team's guidance. Bring your grafting knife. We suggest that you secure the scion wood varieties that you want to add to your home tree during the Winter Field Day and store them in the refrigerator at home until you are trained in the art. Do not bring them to the class. These scions are to be used on your tree at home after the training. **Limited to 12 members.**

May 31 - Apple Thinning Guide and Apple Maggot Control in the Backyard Orchard with the leaders of the NWF Apple workgroup. We will show you how to thin your fruit to improve individual fruit growth, and then you will get to practice. Techniques for insect control in your home orchard will be discussed and include chemical spray, kaolin clay, sticky traps, fruit footies, wax paper sacks, and tree netting. We will then demonstrate, with your participation, the use of sticky traps, fruit footies and tree netting. **Limited to 25 members.**

from Jake Jacobson • Grafting tools >



Volunteer for March 8

Please consider putting in some time on Winter Field Day to assist. We can always use more hands on deck! Email info@nwfruit.org to volunteer, even for a limited period of time that day.

Thank you!!

Heritage Apple Project

The fruit garden committee plans a row in W3, near the Liberty apple trellis, for planting a group of heritage apple trees. Lori Brakken will explain the project further at the Winter Field Day. Look for our sign-up list at Winter Field Day on March 8; several people have expressed interest in helping with this project.

The planting will include unique varieties that originated in the Pacific Northwest although the precise geographical area to be covered is still under consideration. In this way NWF can help preserve these varieties which might otherwise go extinct.

You may recall Lori Brakken from NWF Apple & Pear Day in October, her leadership in recognizing and collecting regional apple varieties. From her works with regional experts, Lori is helping us select twenty-five of these unique cultivars. Volunteer Larry Crum will lead the grafting, using scionwood to topwork existing trellis trees—eight Karmijns on Bud 9 in sector W2 and eight Cosmic Crisps on M 27 in W3. These grafted trees will stay within the height of the trellis wire, and they will begin bearing fruit in two years.

In addition, nine Bud 9 rootstocks will be grafted in our nursery to plant when they are ready. This project serves the interest of our gardening public for historical and cultural significance in Skagit and surrounding counties.

Under discussion: Here are some of the candidates from Lori's list, with the date and place of origin. :

Airlie Red Flesh	2000	Airlie OR
Buckley Giant	1954	Sumner WA
Cantrel	1872	Walla Walla WA
Chehalis	1937	Oakville WA
Chelan	1890	Lake Chelan WA
Coos River	1901	Marshfield OR
Criterion	1973	Parker WA
Earligold	1979	Selah WA
Fort Vancouver	1826	Fort Vancouver WA
Gold Ridge	1912	Santa Rosa CA



Lori Brakken juggles! and collects unique apples.

Gravenstein, red Washington	1910	Olga WA
Hudson's Golden Gem	1931	Tangent OR
Pacific Gold	1948	Myrtle Point OR
Pacific Pride	1909	Mount Vernon WA
Redgold	1946	Cashmere WA
Rubaiyat	1944	Ettersburg CA
Sierra Beauty	1923	Chico CA
Spokane Beauty	1898	Spokane WA
Stark Jumbo	1971	Hood River OR
Starkrimson Delicious	1957	Hood River OR
SummerRed	1964	Summerland BC
Vanderpool Red	1903	Benton County OR
White Pippin	- origin unclear, possibly Canadian but many old trees are in Mount Vernon area.	

DNA Testing in the Fruit Garden

NWF volunteers are working with Dr. Cameron Peace at WSU Pullman to do DNA testing of some of our apple trees, to verify if they are true to what we thought they were. In 2023 we sent four samples for testing and we learned that, on three of the four, we needed to change our Fruit Garden labels. (See [NWF Feb '24 newsletter, page 11.](#))

In 2024 we sent ten more samples collected at or near the Fruit Garden. We took a few new leaves from each tree and sent them to Dr. Peace's lab, in a test tube supplied by WSU. Sending and paying for samples can be done by anyone, the cost of each sample is \$50. Your tree can participate in this research, see details for DNA collecting, at [MyFruitTree.org](#).

Among the things we learned is that we do have a direct descendant from the trees planted by Johnny Appleseed. We also found that a tree in our inner oval labelled Arkansas Black is actually the M111 rootstock and not the variety. As part of our Heritage Apple Project we will sample each variety to verify its unique DNA provenance.

Results from Dr. Peace on 2024 samples sent by NW Fruit:

Arkansas Black....from fruit garden: This sample is the rootstock M111.

Johnny Appleseed...in the NWF nursery, purchased from Raintree Nursery: This is same as the Seed Savers Exchange tree labeled as John Chapman.

Homestead Apple...from Les Price: This is Esopus Spitzenburg.

Arkansas Black...from Drew Zimmerman: This is Enterprise.

Anacortes Ferry tree...from Faraneh: Unique, not genetically identical with any named cultivar or any other individual in our current dataset. Its parents are probably Delicious and Jonathan.

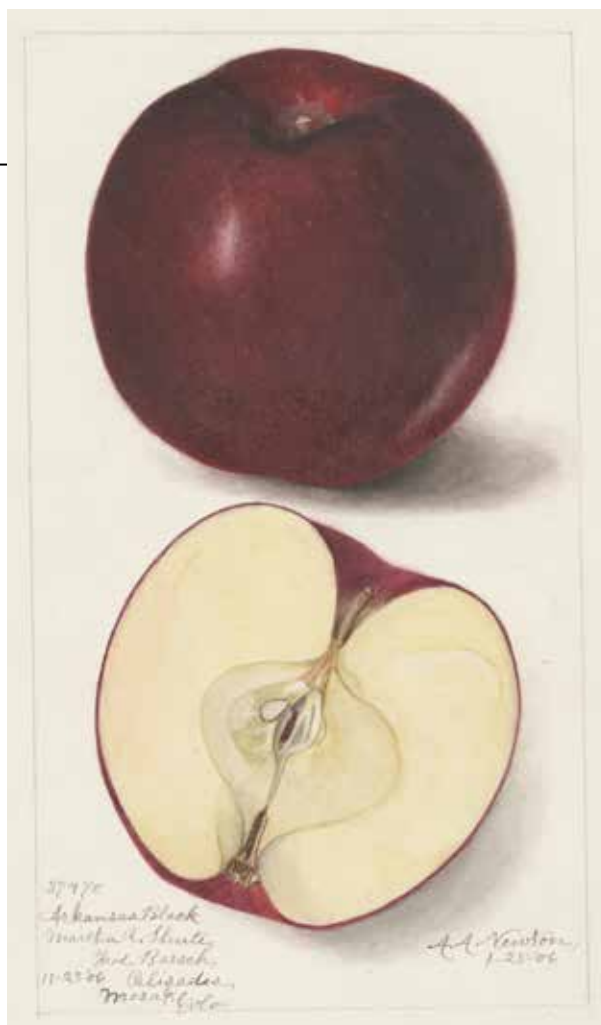
Saray Sinap...from Laure Janzen: Unique, not genetically identical with any named cultivar or any other individual in our current dataset. One parent is probably Lawver, which makes it unlikely that it is the true Sary Sinap.

Maybe a **Pippen**....from Colleen Sanders: This is Grimes Golden.

Vashon small apple...from Laure Janzen: This is McIntosh.

Skiyou Farm apple...from Celeste Frisbee: Unique, not genetically identical with any named cultivar or any other individual in our current dataset. Its parents are probably Yellow Transparent and Wolf River.

Equality Farm apple...from Tom Wake: This is probably Gravenstein, but merits a rerun.



Arkansas Black from Pallisades Colorado, 1906
by Amanda A. Newton, USDA Pomological Watercolor Collection

Several NWF conversations questioned the accuracy of the identification of our inner oval Arkansas Black tree, its fruit hasn't met the classic dark skin standard documented by pomologists.

***NW Fruit Thanks
Raintree Nursery***

Morton, WA

800-391-8892 • raintreenursery.com

For continuing support



A Great Blue heron takes flight in the inner oval of the Fruit Garden in February • Scott Terrell

Northwest Fruit (aka Western Washington Fruit Research Foundation)

Membership Form

Please check one box ONLY: Renewal New Member

DATE: _____

Name _____ Email address _____

Address _____ Phone # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please check all applicable lines to designate type of membership and/or extra donation:

- _____ \$25 FOR ANNUAL INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP (One person only)
- _____ \$40 FOR ANNUAL FAMILY MEMBERSHIP (Parents with their minor children)
- _____ \$ FOR GIFT MEMBERSHIP FOR: (Please note For Whom, above at Name)
- _____ \$125 FOR ANNUAL COMMERCIAL (List Only) MEMBERSHIP
(Includes 3 people, and also includes business name on our website)
- _____ \$200 FOR ANNUAL COMMERCIAL (Full) MEMBERSHIP
(Includes 3 people, and also includes a link from our website to the commercial members' website)
- _____ AN EXTRA DONATION of \$ _____ FOR _____ GENERAL FUND _____ FRUIT GARDEN

I would like to volunteer to help as follows (please check all applicable lines):

- _____ FIELD WORK IN THE WWFRF FRUIT DISPLAY GARDEN (Thursdays/Saturdays, 9am to noon)
- _____ BY DOING WORK I CAN DO AT HOME USING MY COMPUTER OR TELEPHONE

**Please make your check payable to >>
and MAIL your completed membership form
and check to this address:**

NW Fruit or WWFRF
PO Box 864
Mount Vernon, WA 98273



Ficus, Plate 125 by Elizabeth Blackwell, 1771. USDA National Agricultural Library, Special Collections

◆ **NWFruit Fig Project** ◆

From Sam Benowitz and Ned Garvey

Edible figs are widely grown in the warm Mediterranean basin but the climate of the Pacific Northwest is too cool for many varieties. The NWF Fruit Garden is fortunate to have volunteer Ned Garvey, a retired USDA scientist, in charge of our exploratory fig planting. The first of two fig rows was planted in sector W3 last year; Ned will plant the second row this spring.

Most varieties of figs can produce two crops a year. The first crop in the calendar year is called “Breba,” which bears fruit on last year’s wood. The second is called “Main” or “alpha” which bears fruit on the current year’s new growth. The Puget Sound region is usually too cool to ripen the Main crop which could ripen if our summer and fall were hotter than they are (so far).

From Sam’s friend, fig explorer and enthusiast Denny McGaughy, we learned that many figs require an insect pollinator which we don’t have here. However, a group called “San Pedro” figs thrive bounteously in the Pacific Northwest, especially the “breba” crop which ripens typically around August.

Because our climate is cooler than that of the Mediterranean region, the NWF Fig Project examines varieties from territory such as southern England, Japan, and France’s Brittany area on the Atlantic coast, to find fig varieties from climates more like ours.

For winter protection Ned placed a chicken wire circle around each plant and as temperatures dipped, covered each with mulch that is held in by a plastic bag. This protects the figs which will die back at temperatures between 10 and 15 degrees F. This winter we covered them as temperatures dipped below 20 degrees just to be safe and in acknowledgment that newly established plants are usually less winter hardy.

Varieties Planted in April 2024:

Desert King - A large fig with dark green skin and pink flesh. It is the most consistent cropper in our region, ripening the Breba crop each year in August. Produced on the previous season’s growth, prune accordingly.

Olympian - Newly available, found in Olympia Washington, this variety regularly ripens a sizeable crop in August and might produce a fall crop as well. Thanks to Denny McGaughy for this red/purple skinned, red fleshed variety.

Brown Turkey - The skin is mahogany in color, the flesh is light amber and very sweet. The hardy tree will bear heavily and can have two crops of very large delicious fruit a year.



NWF Fig Project, continued

Madeleine de Deux Saisons - These large, plump, brown figs with succulent pink flesh, reliably ripen on the cold and rainy coast of Brittany in France, where other cultivars fail. Originally from Anjou, this fig, also known as Angelica, has proven to ripen each August in the Pacific Northwest. Like many figs, in cold and damp climates it is susceptible to botrytis.

Nordland Bergfeige - Originally from Switzerland, this hardy fig can survive to 10°F and possibly lower. The Nordland is a brownish fig, very sweet and tasty. It has proven to thrive and ripen a fall Main crop in earlier trials at the WSU NWREC in Mount Vernon.

Little Ruby - Tiny but mighty! So small it's grown by some as a bonsai specimen, it sets both the overwintering "breba" summer crop and regularly ripens a "main" fall crop in Western Washington. Another variety from Denny McGaughy, Little Ruby comes from near Olympia WA.

Beall - Denny McGaughy found ripe figs in late September in British Columbia, Canada. After several years of observations he is now confident it is the variety Beall (a seedling of a caprifig Archipelle). In cool, wet, Elma Washington his cuttings from that tree now produce abundant Breba crops every summer about the same time as Desert King. The moderate second crop ripens early, before Little Ruby. The figs are glossy black with a white to pale amber sweet and rich tasting interior when ripe. The smooth shiny skin of the fruit resists rain damage and spoilage, allowing them to remain on the tree until fully ripe in wetter ripening seasons. It is a strong limbed upright grower.

Grantham's Royal - Very large purple fig with pinkish-amber flesh; heavy breba crop ripens mid-August. San Pedro type, popular in England.

More To Come - Visit the NWF Fig Project this winter in sector W3. Come on a Thursday to learn about pruning figs. See these nine varieties growing, plus nine more to be planted this spring. More detail in our June newsletter.



< Nine figs protected from February cold.

Relevant articles about figs for the western Washington region:

[Growing Figs](#) by Sonja Nelson, Skagit County WSU Master Gardener

WSU Fact Sheet #46 - [Figs & Kiwis](#)

NWF Interest Groups

NW Fruit volunteers engage in interest groups to manage specific projects. Some administrative tasks could benefit from modernization. Your skills are welcome. We use the Work Group model to keep track of seasonal projects, and to coordinate with the Garden Manager and the Garden Committee. Inquire at info@nwfruit.org. These work groups offer experience accordingly:

In the Garden

- Blueberries, Cherries, Kiwi, Pears, Heritage Apples, Elderberries, Peaches, Persimmons & more
- Pollinator friendly plantings
- Espalier training
- Construction projects, Irrigation, Organic Growing

Or Administrative Support

Website & Media Updates
Volunteer Coordinating
Membership/Mailing
Communications
Event Planning
Publicity

Northwest Fruit (aka Western Washington Fruit Research Foundation)

Donor Form

To make a donation by credit card go to: NWfruit.org and click on Support.

Enclosed is my gift of: \$5000 \$1000 \$500 \$100 \$50 \$25 \$ _____

Please designate my monetary gift toward: Where it is needed most! Our Fruit Garden
 Field Days and other events

Name _____ Email address _____

Address _____ Phone # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please make my gift: In Honor of: In Memory of:

(Name of person) _____

Address of person or person's family _____
(So we can notify them) _____

**Please make check payable to:
and mail your donation
along with this form to:**

NW Fruit or WWFRF
P.O. Box 864
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Your gift is tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. Please consult your tax accountant for details.

Thank you!

Benefits of Membership



Western Washington Fruit Research Foundation (WWFRF), aka NW Fruit is a 501(c) non-profit organization created thirty years ago. Your annual membership dues support the foundation that maintains the six-acre Fruit Garden, a collection of hundreds of varieties of fruit. It offers members and the community hands-on opportunities to learn about fruit growing in our region through advocacy, education and demonstration.

- Field Days and Workshops are free to members.
- Apple & Pear Sample-the-Harvest Day, second Saturday in October, offers garden tours and lectures on growing and harvesting fruit. Members are offered samples of apples, pears, grapes, and sometimes cider, to take home. Crop quantities vary from year to year.
- Winter Field Day, second Saturday in March, offers tours, lectures on fruit growing, grafting demonstrations, plus sale of scionwood and rootstocks for grafting apple, pear and other fruit trees.
- Workshops are held in Spring and Summer on learning to prune apple, pear, plum, and cherry trees, as well as blueberry bushes, grape and kiwi vines.
- Volunteers who help with maintaining the orchard are rewarded with formal and informal learning opportunities as well as fellowship with other people who are passionate about growing and tasting fruit.
- As a member you may volunteer to work in the Fruit Garden on designated days. Members receive instructions on maintaining the trees, safety, and growing conditions in the local climate. Membership is required for all volunteers to work in the garden.

Thank You to North Hill Resources

4600 651 N. Hill Blvd, Burlington 98233
360-757-1866 • NorthHillResources.com

**For landscaping materials and
continuing support**

- 
- 
- A picnic for volunteers is held in the summer.
 - Members receive the NW Fruit newsletter three times a year with current information about the organization's activities and fruit growing.
 - Membership ensures your inclusion in occasional emails about Field Days, special events and workshops that occur through the year.
 - Membership helps NWF pay expenses for:
Events: auditorium, speakers & publicity
Garden Maintenance: tools & equipment
 - Members may attend board meetings, join committees and participate in committee planning.

An Absence of Malus? No!

From Rob Diekman

Long about a year ago, in January, fruit tree enthusiast Rob Diekman walked around the low lying areas on his property on Whidby Island. Inspired by a YouTube and subsequent research, Rob had learned that the Swamp Crab (aka Pacific Crab, *Malus fusca*, *Pyrus fusca*, *Malus diversifolia* etc) is native to the Pacific NW and is reputed to be good for grafting. Lo and behold, he found numerous bushy, shaggy-barked, thorn-spiked small trees with the telltale dried fruit berries of winter.

With gusto, Rob pruned (ask him about his battery operated Milwaukee pruner), did more research, became an NWF member, purchased some apple scions, and signed up for Larry Crum's grafting class at the Fruit Garden.

Malus fusca is noteworthy for its versatility, tolerance for wetland conditions and its vigor. It is the only native apple tree in Western North America. Rob has truly made art with his useful lowland asset, and he's generous in sharing his YouTube experts: JScandura, Susan Poizner's *Orchard People*, and Nick Kasko. His new friend Nick has contributed the following description of *Malus fusca* experience.



*Rob has learned that the thorn-spike of *M fusca* is in fact a fruit spur.*



Grafting Apples to *Malus fusca*

From Nick Kasko

I have had the opportunity to graft apples to *Malus fusca* (Pacific crabapple or swamp apple) for over 10 years. *Malus fusca* is highly tolerant of wet soil conditions, including flooding. I have observed trees standing in water for weeks without any noticeable damage. However, there are limits—if the standing water lacks oxygen, the roots will suffocate. This can happen in areas where livestock or poultry contribute significant amounts of manure, as bacterial activity in the water depletes oxygen, creating anaerobic conditions that can kill most plants.

M. fusca is extremely vigorous in its early years, then slows down, beginning to slow down after year ten. This early vigor, followed by gradual tapering, is an excellent trait. It allows trees to establish quickly but avoids excessive height, reducing the need for heavy pruning. Interestingly, contrary to some reports, my *Malus fusca*-grafted trees have been very precocious, often fruiting before M.111.

Grafting to *Malus fusca*, continued

From Nick Kasko

Performance in Wetlands

I grow most of my apples in wetlands north of Bellingham, WA, where the water table is high. During winter, my *Malus fusca*-rooted trees often stand in over a foot of water, yet they continue to produce fruit reliably.

Bark Development & Grafting Height

As *Malus fusca* ages, it develops shaggy bark, which seems to deter rabbits and voles. To take advantage of this trait, I recommend grafting at least 18 inches high to keep the graft above potential flood levels and out of rabbits' reach.

Graft Compatibility & Cross-Species Grafting

Malus fusca has excellent graft compatibility with apples. I have successfully grafted hundreds of varieties with no graft rejection. I have also experimented with grafting pears and quince directly onto *Malus fusca*. While both species produced fruit, long-term incompatibility became apparent, with visible diameter mismatches and poor productivity. There are some strategies to improve survival of cross-species grafts. Leave some *Malus fusca* growth below the graft to help nourish the roots. One could also use interstems as a bridge between different species (a topic I cover on my YouTube channel).

Root Suckering & Anchorage

Malus fusca tends to sucker regularly, sometimes producing shoots up to 20 feet from the mother tree. These suckers can be dug up and used as new rootstocks. Unlike some plums, these suckers are relatively manageable. The anchorage of *Malus fusca* is exceptional, I have never seen a tree on this rootstock fall over, even in stormy conditions.

Soil Adaptability

Beyond its flood tolerance, *Malus fusca* is highly adaptable, thriving in sandy, clay, and wet soils. It grows exceptionally well in Spokane's sandy soils. *Malus fusca* shows greater vigor on my brother's property in Sedro-Woolley where the soil is quite heavy in clay and very poor.

Why *Malus Fusca* is a Worthwhile Rootstock

- Unmatched flood tolerance
- Strong anchorage
- Adaptability
- Early vigor, then manageable growth
- Excellent apple graft compatibility

For the best results, graft high to take advantage of *Malus fusca*'s bark development and flood resistance. If you're growing apples in challenging soil conditions, *Malus fusca* is a rootstock worth considering.



*Nick points to a five or six year old graft on *M fusca*.*

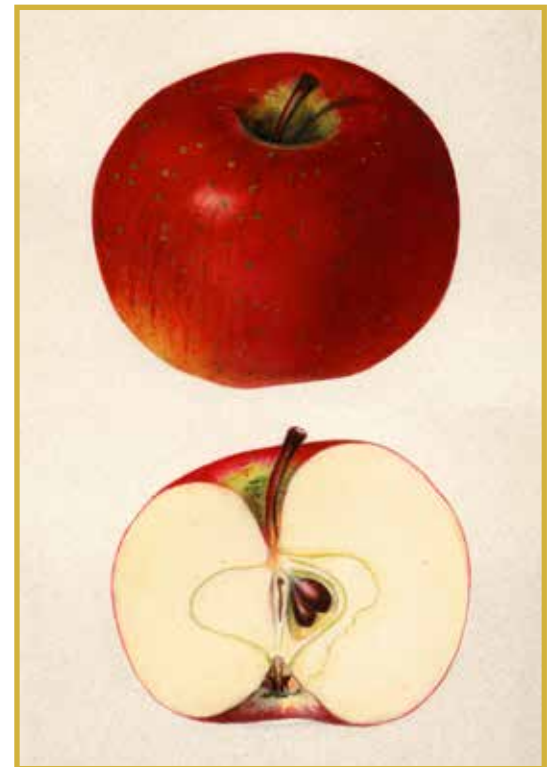


Various apple scions grafted to swamp crabapple. The pale one, not looking healthy, is an Asian pear. "I took a swing but missed," says Rob D.

About Oliver - from Larry Crum

In the early 1800's, John Oliver of Washington County, Arkansas raised an apple tree on his farm that produced a striking red apple with thick, smooth, glossy yellow skin overlaid with rich-red and streaks of darker red. The yellowish flesh is fine-grained and juicy and often stained with red. It became a very popular local variety and was widely grown in the Ozarks of Arkansas. In 1895, Stark Bro's Nursery sold this apple under the trademarked name, **Senator**.

Comments from a grower: "I have enjoyed a few of this variety for the past several years; this year, I finally have a dozen or so (it is a small graft) and am more fully appreciating it. It is a very tasty apple, in the Northern Spy school of taste (hard to describe if you have not had it - more grape-like perhaps). I particularly like it because I have lots of rotting problems on the Northern Spy types and this guy does not rot at all. They do not like being picked early, and they do color up early so you need to watch it. They would also prefer some time in the cellar. They are very tasty apple, super productive, and bulletproof. What's not to like?"



Oliver Red, by Deborah Griscom Passmore, 1840-1911, creator artist USDA



NWF Winter Field Day will have available over 1000 scionwoods • photo from Scott Terrell

We're Not Addicts — We're Passionate!

My cousin said, "Looks like a drug raid," when he saw the scionwood packets we are preparing for our members on Winter Field Day. On this page, above, I give you just one of the many descriptions you'll find at nwfruit.org/winter-field-day-scionwood. As you can see, in this issue I admire and appreciate the resources at USDA, including the apple illustrations, informative and beautiful. It is appropriate and challenging for us to pay attention to changes.

Laura W. Wilson, NWF newsletter editor

Many Hands Make Light Work

Please consider joining the **Membership Team**.

From home you can help NWF with database know-how. Or offer some time for our events by helping at the Registration Tables.

Send a note of your availability to info@nwfruit.org.

Grant Applications for Fruit Garden

NWFruit has applied for two grants from the **Skagit County Community Foundation**. We expect to hear whether we get either or both grants in May.

One grant is to hire the EdgePerma landscape company to help us create a Virtual Tour that the public can use to view our fruit garden remotely. It will be combined with QR codes to update our existing garden tour that is already on our website.

The second grant is to purchase a zero-turn mower for mowing in the tight space around trees, a non-chemical method to discourage moles and voles in the fruit garden.



Hersh Hauling team with Tom Wake

◆◆ Thank You ◆◆ to Miller Barns & Hersh Hauling

509-834-0034 • www.mbarns.com

• hershhauling@gmail.com •

in Mount Vernon

NWF volunteer Mike Harding worked with Barbara and Allen Miller of Miller Barns LLC for the construction, and with Matt Hersh and his son for installation of an additional storage shed. Volunteers now have better access to tools for pruning, pest control, equipment operation and irrigation.

Weekly Work Parties – Find Schedule at NWfruit.org

Thursdays 9 to 12

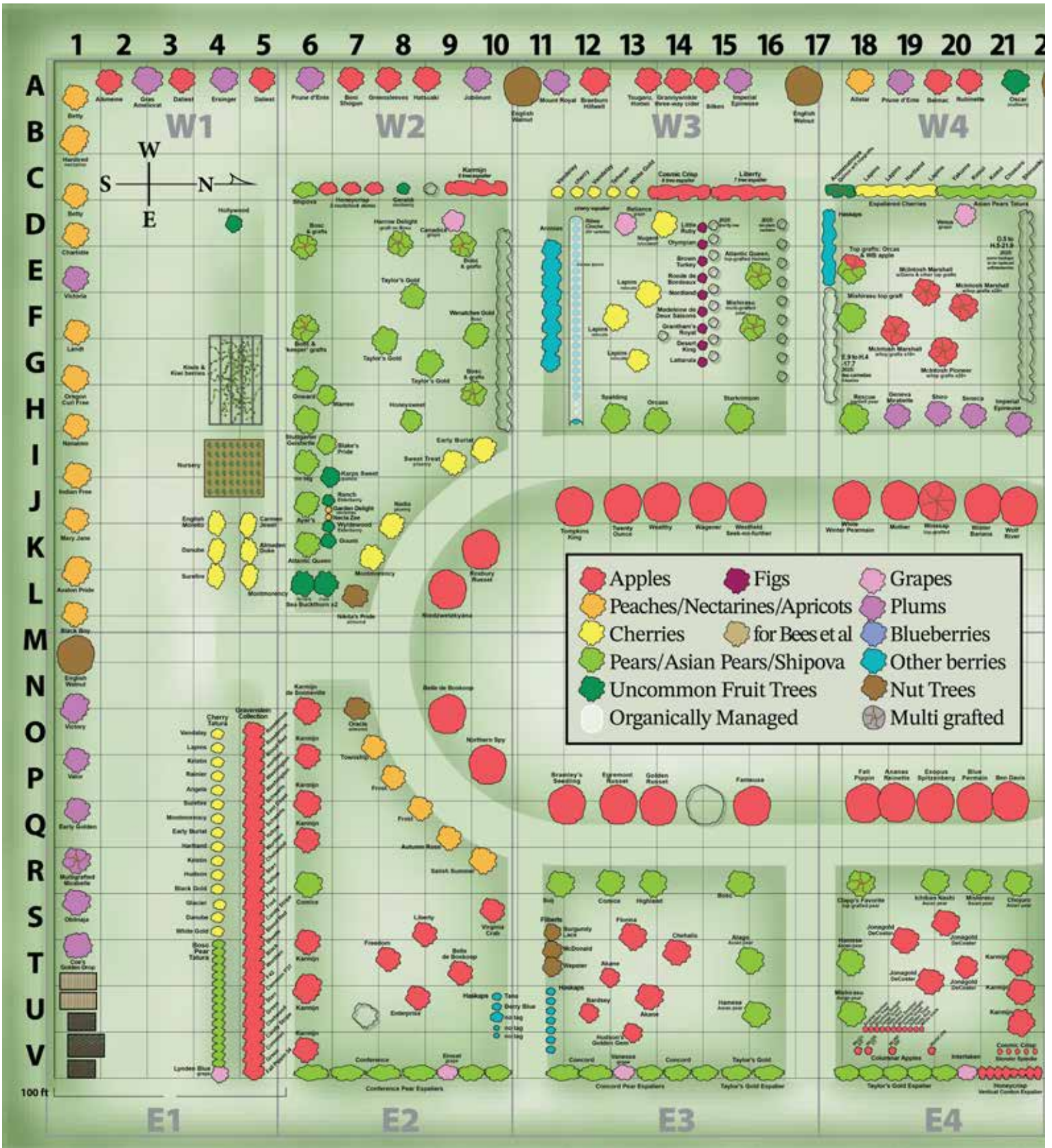
Saturdays 9 to 12, check [website](#) for Saturday dates

In spring we will continue Saturday work days, for aspiring volunteers who can't come on Thursdays. Dress for the weather and bring a pair of hand pruners. Come help with seasonal pruning and collecting scionwood for our March field day. Park in the parking area on the North end of the Garden. These workdays are great opportunities to learn about growing fruit, meet friends, and to contribute to caring for the Fruit Garden.

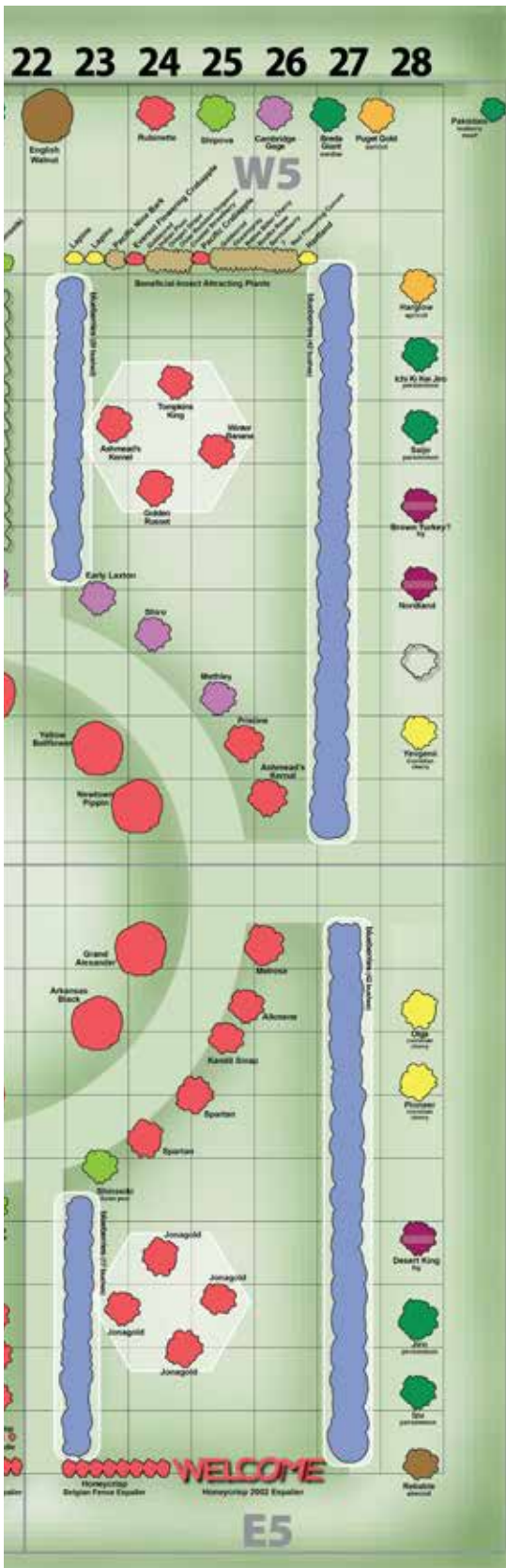
Note: NFW Membership is required for volunteering in the Fruit Garden.

Please contact Tom Wake for details, at info@nwfruit.org.

2025 Fruit Garden Map



2025 Fruit Garden Map, continued



2025 Fruit Garden Map

It's a bit tricky, trying to convey a 32" x 26.5" map onto 8.5 x 11: pages, but we want to show some recent work product. The full size map is or will soon be available at Nwfruit.org for you to download and print. The names will be legible, and the alphanumeric grid will soon be cross-referenced on an inventory list which we plan to display on one of the kiosk signs along with the map. Thus you will be able to visit the garden with a question like, 'Does the garden have any Methley plums?' The answer can be found on the list and thus on the map so you can go see it growing.

We are also planning the update of the Self-guided tour along with QR code links on the respective trees and signs.

Looking at this colorful though not quite legible map you can see a lot in the way of the ten sectors, the balanced layout, where to look for peaches for instance, or top-worked trees. Note the Organically Managed areas in white.

Noteworthy Aside: The four Jonagolds in E5 plus the four apple trees in W5 are organically managed, sprayed with OMRI ([Organic Materials Review Institute](http://OrganicMaterialsReviewInstitute)) listed sprays only, with traps for pests, netting, footies on fruit to demonstrate other techniques for an effective organic approach. So those trees are managed organically. ALL of the blueberries are organically managed using several techniques. Many of the trees and shrubs receive no spray at all. Apples and peaches are treated, with minimal spraying for targeted pests and diseases. Come to the garden on a Thursday and learn more about how NWF manages this care.



You'll be glad! Thank you for your membership!

🌀 Collecting Scionwood 🌀

Collect scionwood during winter dormancy. Select only new, one year growth that will be at the end of branches. Cut each growth stalk into about 10" to 12" lengths for useable scionwood. Try for pencil size wood to match the diameter of typical rootstocks.

Label the scionwood so you know the variety. It is good practise to seal both ends with parafin or other tree seal. Place in a plastic bag with a wet, wrung out, paper towel in the bag and seal it.

If you aren't ready to graft, store it in the refrigerator. Make sure fruit is not in the refrigerator because fruit gives off ethylene gas, which makes the scionwood come out of dormancy. Your scionwood can be kept dormant for a few weeks until you are ready to graft.

Upcoming Events

- 9 to Noon Workdays — Fun and educational Thursday Work Days every week, plus frequently scheduled Saturday work days, for willing volunteers who can't come on Thursdays. Learn about all that's going on, plus new ideas being proposed. For more information contact Garden Manager Tom Wake info@NWfruit.org
 - Several NWF workshop days are offered in spring and summer, sometimes with fruit sampling, depending on the season. Free to Members.
 - Apple and Pear Sample the Harvest Day second Saturday in October. This event centers around the harvest with educational classes on related garden techniques and information. Members are allowed to keep a portion of the harvested fruit.
 - Cider Making - on one or two Thursday's after Apple and Pear Day in the fall.
 - December Celebration with cookies and end-of-season farewells. Program may include informative classes to answer home gardeners' questions. Free to Members.
 - Winter Field Day -- Second Saturday in March. Scions, rootstock and grafting services for sale plus indoor classes about seasonal garden topics for your home garden. Free admission with up-to-date membership. Details in February Newsletter.
 - Annual Membership Meeting - March 8, 2025
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